

# Myriophyllum robustum

## COMMON NAMES

stout water milfoil

## BIOSTATUS

Native – Endemic taxon

## CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2023 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: Sp, CI

[Jump to previous conservation statuses](#)

## CATEGORY

Vascular

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial aquatic herb which if in pools of water is firmly rooted to the bottom. Stems spongy, inflated up to 1.5 m long, emergent portion 300 mm tall, erect to prostrate. Submerged leaves in whorls of (4–)5–7, (15–)20–35 x (4–)6–10 mm finely divided, pectinate with 26–32 pinnae, brown, these diminishing in size toward water surface. Emergent leaves glaucous, tinged red, narrowly ovate to oblong, apex acute, otherwise similar to submerged leaves. Flowers perfect. Sepals 4, ovate to deltoid 0.6–0.8 x 0.5–0.6 mm, petals 4, weakly hooded, 2.5–4 x 1–1.5 mm. Fruits globular to slightly turbinate, 1.5–2 x 2–2.5 mm.

## SIMILAR TAXA

Similar to the naturalised *M. aquaticum* (Vell.) Verdc. from which it differs by being monoecious (males and females on the same plant), the exposed stems usually pink coloured and by the leaf tips, which are acute rather than blunted ended

## DISTRIBUTION

Endemic to the North and South Islands. In the North Island now known only from Northland to Taranaki and the northern Rangitikei. In the South Island known only from North West Nelson, the West Coast and Fiordland

## HABITAT

Shallow peaty lakes, slow flowing streams, dune ponds, and in muddy or seasonally flooded ground in alluvial forest.

## THREATS

Threatened by wetland drainage, eutrophication, and the spread of naturalised wetland weeds.

## GENUS

Myriophyllum

## FAMILY

Haloragaceae

## AUTHORITY

*Myriophyllum robustum* Hook.f.

## SYNONYMS

*Myriophyllum variaefolium* var. *beta* Hook.f.



*Myriophyllum robustum* in fruit, Whangamarino Wetlands. Photographer: Bec Stanley, Date taken: 01/12/1998, Licence: CC BY-SA.



Detail of emergent foliage and flowers, ex. cult. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

## ENDEMIC GENUS

No

## ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

## FLOWERING

September – March

## FRUITING

October – April

## PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easy in a pond or in permanently damp soils. Can be grown from division of rooted pieces, by cuttings and seed. An attractive plant which should be more widely grown.

## WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

OBL: Obligate Wetland

Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands (non-wetlands).

## CULTIVATION

*Myriophyllum robustum* is proving popular as an aquarium and pond plant.

## ETYMOLOGY

**myriophyllum**: Many leaves

**robustum**: Sturdy

## NVS CODE

MYRROB

## CHROMOSOME NUMBER

$2n = 28$

## PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2017 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp

2012 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: Sp

2009 | At Risk – Declining | Qualifiers: EF, Sp

2004 | Gradual Decline

[Jump to current conservation status](#)

## REGIONAL CONSERVATION STATUSES

Auckland: 2025 | Regionally Threatened – Regionally Critical | Qualifiers: DPR, DPS, DPT, PF, RR Help

The regional threat classification system leverages off the national assessments in the NZTCS, providing information relevant for the regional context. Auckland conservation status information is sourced from the "[Conservation status of vascular plant species in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland](#)" Simpkins E et al. (2025) report.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Orchard, A.E. 1979: *Myriophyllum* (Haloragaceae) in Australasia. 1. New Zealand: a revision of the genus and a synopsis of the family. *Brunonia* 2: 247-287.

## ATTRIBUTION

Fact Sheet Prepared by P.J. de Lange (1 April 2007). Description based on fresh plants and herbarium material—see also Orchard (1979)

## NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: de Lange, P.J. (Year at time of access): *Myriophyllum robustum* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network.

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myriophyllum-robustum/> (Date website was queried)

**MORE INFORMATION**

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/myriophyllum-robustum/>

**PDF DATE**

27 May 2026